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## **The Clerisy Despises the Bourgeoisie, the Liberals, and the Little Midwestern City**

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The little Midwestern city has for a century or so been an object of contempt by most of the tribe of scribblers and lecturers and preachers – what Samuel Taylor Coleridge and I call the “clerisy.” The contempt is especially strong if the cleric is an American coastie, or a coastie-educated academic. Looking down from 30,000 feet onto the northern portion of the Census Bureau’s North Central Region – the region known to her as Flyover Country – she notes the square layout of sections on the model of the Northwest Ordinance, fitted to the chief points of the compass and marked now by arrow-straight border roads extending ten miles. It allows her, if she is quantitatively inclined, to calculate the speed of her airplane, from how many seconds it takes to

traverse the square mile of the section. If she is a little familiar with Midwestern history on the ground, she will recognize the county seats, serving in their geographical hierarchy the quarter-section farms that once covered the Great American Desert. She shudders, and turns back to her copy of *The New York Review of Books*.

She might have a better opinion of the little cities of the Midwest if she had actually spent time in Dell Rapids, South Dakota or Columbus, Indiana or Iowa City, Iowa (T-shirt from Iowa Book and Supply, lampooning the coastie vagueness about vowel-states west of the Hudson: “University of Iowa, Idaho City, Ohio”). And if she had visited some county seats thereabouts she would surely appreciate the glorious, if slightly wacky, late 19<sup>th</sup>-century architecture of the county-court buildings, rising in the middle of the downtown squares. But mostly she won’t, because she has read American fiction since 1922 and *Babbitt*. And she won’t because she has taken so much from European ideologies of left or right, flourishing after the disappointments of the revolutionary year of 1848. The ideologies recommended hatred of the bourgeoisie and disdain for the bourgeoisie’s ideology of liberalism. In 1935 the liberal Dutch historian Johan Huizinga noted that the hatred had long become general among the European clerisy. “In the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” he wrote, “‘bourgeois’ became the most pejorative term of all, particularly in the mouths of socialists and artists, and later even of fascists.”<sup>1</sup> The

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1 Johan H. Huizinga, 1935, “The Spirit of the Netherlands,” pp. 105-137 in Huizinga, *Dutch Civilization in the Seventeenth Century and Other Essays*; Pieter Geyl and F. W. N. Hugenholtz, eds.; A. J. Pomerans, trans.; London: Collins, 1968.

liberals of Huizinga's sort were damned along with the bourgeoisie they admired. A Dutch left-wing poem in the 1930s, written on a slow news day by the editor of a local newspaper – he was fired for printing it – speaks of the conservative wing of his colleagues of the clerisy, "*de dominee, de dokter, de notaris,*" the minister, the doctor, the lawyer-notary, who together strolled complacently on Arnhem's town square of an evening. "There is nothing left on earth for them to learn,/ They are perfect and complete,/ Old liberals, distrustful and healthy."<sup>2</sup>

The clerisy of Holland, Germany, Britain, and especially France came to hate merchants and manufacturers, and anyone who did not admire the anti-bourgeois clerisy's books and paintings. Flaubert declared somewhere (and everywhere), "I call bourgeois whoever thinks basely." He wrote to George Sand in 1867, "*Axiome: la haine du bourgeois est le commencement de la vertu,*" which is to say, it is an axiom that hatred of the bourgeois man is the beginning of virtue.<sup>3</sup> An educated American coastie aches to be virtuous so, and she has learned that nothing is more hatefully bourgeois in America than Sinclair Lewis's George F. Babbitt. The Trump vote recently reinforced it. *Bad*

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2 Reprinted and translated in Han van der Horst, *The Low Sky: Understanding the Dutch*. Schiedam: Scriptum, 1996, p. 142. The poem, by Jan Gresshof, was called "Liefdesverklaring," or "Love-Declaration."

3 Flaubert (May 10, 1867), in *Oeuvres complètes et Annexes. Correspondance*, p. 5883.

Babbitt. *Bad bourgeoisie. Bad Battle Creek, Michigan* (Calhoun County in 2016: 53.6% Trump).

The American coastie's hatred of the bourgeoisie does not extend to human gatherings in the Midwest smaller than Winesburg, Ohio or larger than Indianapolis, Indiana. The individual farm, for instance, has long been elevated in such books as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900, musical 1902, movie 1939, second musical 2011) to the rough-hewn dignity of Aunt Em. The elevation has persisted as nostalgia well after Americans left farming. In 1900, 40 percent of the US population lived on farms. Now it's 2 percent and falling, a high percentage of the remnant working at second, non-farm job such as truck driving. Yet an American of the clerisy in New York or Los Angeles still dreams sweetly of the Midwestern family farm, declaring stoutly his opposition to corporate farming (1 percent of farms, although 10 percent of their output) and to the expansion of urban land into the surrounding countryside (taking in total over the past twenty years about 2 percent of existing farm acreage). Bucolic nostalgia for the family farm, as in the charming animated movie *Babe* (1995), persists into an age in which three-quarters of the population of the Midwest live in "urban areas" (above 2,500 souls, and the bulk of them in places above 50,000).

The mythology of the family farm has consequences, as mythologies often do. It has allowed farm-state senators to finagle subsidies from the rest of the population, such as quotas for ethanol in gasoline or for taxpayer-subsidized crop insurance. When Helen in the 1950s expressed sympathy for her uncle Oliver in Watseka, Illinois about

his failed crop of soybeans that year, he replied, "Don't worry, honey. I earn more from Federal crop insurance than from a good crop. I don't farm the land. I farm the government." Among the New Deal's well-intentioned but helter-skelter and sometimes disastrous schemes (which lengthened the Great Depression in the US by many years compared with, say, the UK or Canada) so-called marketing orders still erect cartels to raise the prices to consumers of milk, oranges, potatoes, and onions. The quota protection of US sugar grown from cane or beet keeps the US price twice as high as in Mexico or Brazil. It's been hard on candy manufacturers in Chicago. Yet the Americans intone: "The poor, poor family farmers." Not the poor, poor consumers of onions or makers of candy.

And at the other end of human gatherings, the big Midwestern cities, especially Chicago, are accorded their own nostalgic if not so sweet mythology. Not "poor, poor" but "tough, tough." "Hog butcher for the world, / Tool maker, stacker of wheat, / Player with railroads and the nation's freight handler; / Stormy, husky, brawling, / City of the Big Shoulders." Chicago still claims to have big shoulders, but in truth it's been taken over the narrow shoulders of nurses, accountants, and retail clerks. The Union Stock Yard closed in 1971. The tool makers moved out. The huge grain elevators in the port of southern Chicago stand empty. Rail passengers are a few percent of what they were in 1945, when "change in Chicago" was the watchword (every big metropolis in the railway age prevented travelers from by-passing their hotels and taxis and restaurants: Paris, London, Berlin). Only the freight handling remains, in container trains trundling from Long Beach to Boston—though the freight trains through Chicago

are diverted to hump yards close to, of all undignified placements, the airports. Our airplane coastie noticed one of them when she changed in Chicago.

The contempt for the little Midwestern city is further narrowed to its bourgeois men. The rest of the population gets a pass, the wives, the workers, the children. The men gathered at the Kiwanis Club are the ones carrying the disease of being middle class. A bourgeois man in America does not, even in his own opinion, have the moral luck to be a real hero, that is, a knight or pirate or captain. In 1922 Lewis savagely spoofed in six pages the morning drive to his real estate office of Babbitt, a manly head filled with boyish tales of courage: "To George F. Babbitt, as to most prosperous [male] citizens of Zenith, his motor car was poetry and tragedy, love and heroism. . . . The office was his pirate ship but the car his perilous excursion ashore. . . . Babbitt . . . devoted himself to the game of beating trolley cars to the corner . . . a rare game, and valiant. . . . [Even parking his car] was a virile adventure masterfully executed."<sup>4</sup> Lewis was skilled in mimicking in free indirect style the thoughts of people he despised. In Lewis's novels the characters whose thoughts are mimicked less convincingly are his alter-egos of the clerisy.

The clerisy, especially in a United States lacking a real aristocracy, thinks of itself as a new class of knights unsullied by the merely bourgeois values of its fathers. But it

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4 Lewis, *Babbitt*, 1922, Chapter III.

thinks so uncritically. Lewis was of course himself entangled in such risibly bourgeois values. And anyway he got his bread and motor car and real estate from them. Modern male writers, especially American male writers, allow themselves an aristocratic pose, grace under pressure, death in the afternoon, but are amused by other people taking it. Twenty years after *Babbitt*, James Thurber (ditto for his class entanglement) was still making fun of the bourgeois man's dreams of glory:

"We're going through!" . . . . "We can't make it, sir! It's spoiling for a hurricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased: ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hmm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat beside him, with shocked astonishment.<sup>5</sup>

"How useful it would be from time to time," wrote Huizinga, "to set up all the most common political and cultural terms in a row for reappraisal and disinfection." We need still to do it with the two words Huizinga pointed to, both of which are especially relevant to the little Midwestern city: "liberal" and "bourgeois." Huizinga hoped that "liberal would be restored to its original significance and freed of all the

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5 James Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," *The New Yorker*, March 18, 1939, first paragraph.

emotional overtones that a century of party conflict has attached to it, to stand once again for ‘worthy of a free man.’” Thus Latin *liber*, in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, “possessing the social and legal status of a free man (as opp. to slave),” that is, as opposed to having a human overlord empowered with physical coercion. And the other word: “if bourgeois could be rid of all the negative associations with which envy and pride, for that is what they were, have endowed it, could it not once more refer to all the attributes of urban life?”<sup>6</sup> The two words are connected substantively.

Liberalism flourished historically among the bourgeoisie – though the European clerisy wants to deny the connection, and the American clerisy to change “liberalism” to mean “social democracy.”

The mythology of hateful and hated bourgeoisie, like the mythology of the family farm or broad-shouldered Chicago, has consequences, many of them not so good. In particular it undermines a true liberalism, what the blessed Adam Smith called “the obvious and simple system of natural liberty.”<sup>7</sup> The true liberalism of Smith or John Stuart Mill is not right wing, reactionary, or some scary creature out of *Dark Money*. It stands in the middle of the road – recently a dangerous place to stand – being tolerant and optimistic and respectful. The true liberal is anti-statist, opposing the impulse of people to push other people around with the visible fist of government. It’s

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6 Huizinga 1935 (1968), p. 112.

7 Smith, *The Wealth Of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter IX, p. 687, para. 51.



not “I’ve got mine,” or “Let’s be cruel.” Nor is it “I’m from the government and I’m here to help you, by force of arms if necessary.” It’s “I respect your dignity and am willing to listen, really listen, helping you when you wish, on your own terms.” It’s worth protecting.

We need to rethink the automatic contempt for the liberal bourgeoisie of Zenith and Middletown. The project is to explain the Red States to the Blue, the Midwest to the East and West, the Flyover States to the coasties, the old liberals to the progressives, the bourgeoisie to the clerisy. Or, in an older vocabulary, to explain America to Europe. Or still older, Rome to Greece. And to counter the coastie’s contempt at 30,000 feet, and to question her devotion to a European ideology recommending an illiberal hatred of the bourgeoisie.

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Among the actual aristocracy and its hangers-on, of course, the hatred of liberalism and the bourgeoisie is ancient. In the Confucian ideology of, say, Japan, the ranking was emperor, shogun, daimyos (that is, barons), samurai, peasants, *merchants*, night-soil men and Koreans. At Rome the senatorial class was forbidden to engage in trade, though in truth of course it earned a little on the side, by secret ownership of tenement buildings in Rome or silent partnerships in commercial ventures to Egypt. The Aryan (that is, Iranian) invaders of northern India brought with them the Indo-European ideology of class: Brahmin/priest, Kshatriya /warrior, Vaishyas/farmers (and if they are lucky merchants), Shudras/laborers, and Untouchables.

Chaucer's "very perfect, gentle knight" in *The Canterbury Tales* c. 1400 had a brother who was a priest and another who was a peasant farmer (pointedly leaving out the merchants) – the three Indo-European classes imagined as sweetly cooperative, as against the cheating profit-seekers down in the marketplace. (Likewise in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* L. Frank Baum imagined on Dorothy's uncle's farm in Kansas a sweetly cooperative working class in the three hired hands, who appear in her dream as the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion.) Chaucer elsewhere in "The General Prologue" of the *Tales* describes four of the five solidly middle-class figures – the Merchant, the Reeve (that is, a steward of his master's estate), the Miller, and the Doctor of Physik – as (typically in medieval literature) vain, cheating dealers. (Likewise in *The Wonderful Wizard* the dealer in patent medicines traveling through Kansas appears in the dream as the cheating Wizard, albeit cheating incompetently and in the end sweetly.) Chaucer's Merchant, Donald-Trump style, is "proclaiming always the increase of his winning." "Full rich [the Reeve] had a-storèd privily," cheating his master out of the crop. "Well could [the Miller] steal corn, and charge its toll thrice." The Doctor "kept the gold he won [that is, earned] in pestilence. / For gold in physik is a cordiàl [that is, in medicine is a cure]. / Therefore he lovèd gold in speciàl." (Likewise American literature from Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Guided Age: A Tale of Today* (1873) to John Updike's novels of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom (1960, 1971, 1981, 1990) has been arrayed against the bourgeoisie – in those cases all of it and not especially the bourgeoisie of the small Midwestern city.)

Chaucer, though, had a firm enough grasp on reality that he portrayed the literal clerics, too, as profit seekers. (The American clerisy from Lippmann to Obama, though, exempts itself from the charge of greed.) A non-bourgeois, religious figure in Chaucer, a seller of papal pardons, is said to be as eager “to win silver as he full well could.” The begging Friar, likewise, hears confessions only from rich people, men hard of heart who cannot truly feel sorrow for their sins, and “therefore instead of weeping and prayers / Men must give silver to the poor friars.” (Likewise the American clerisy does in fact seek silver in pay at the office and in bargains at the supermarket and in honor-payment from Guggenheim fellowships, while disdaining the greed of a bourgeoisie provisioning the world.)

One must not of course get carried away with literary examples, whether *Babbitt* or Chaucer. They are not scientific reports, but expressions of ideology. As a leading student of early Italian commerce points out, Chaucer’s or Boccaccio’s or other imaginative “portrayals” of merchants are “organized by a complex system of stereotypes and rhetorical images often resulting from ancient cultural models.”<sup>8</sup> In David Lindsay’s court play in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century *A Satire of the Three Estates* a Merchant’s obsession with the sins of the literal church clerisy, for example, is a

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8 Giacomo Todeschini, “The Theological Roots of Medieval/Modern Merchants’ Self-

Representatio,” pp. 17-48 in Jacob and Secretan, eds., Jacob, Margaret C., and Catherine Secretan, eds., *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 23.

standard turn in medieval literature, one estate complaining about the other instead of answering the (presumably true) charges just mentioned against itself.<sup>9</sup> Literary and other texts are not somehow “objective” reports from the cultural frontier: it is not objectively true that Zenith was full of Babbitts, though about Muncie, Indiana the Lynds claimed with sober scientific rhetoric that it was.

In the secularized theology that governs modern anti-business ideology, a rich man may enter the kingdom of heaven if he is temperate in his pursuit and use of wealth. Bill Gates became OK after his wife and Warren Buffett persuaded him to turn to philanthropy. Before, when he was merely providing people with an operating system that they gladly paid for (defective though it is), he was adjudged “greedy.” (Yet when writers and musicians and artists and other members of the clerisy provide works that people gladly pay for, defective though the art is, they are viewed as noble venturers – Picasso or Pound or Charlie Parker having no greed for fame or silver.) Nowadays, at least outside of the corrupting theories of some economists, most normal people judge it blameworthy in a merchant to pursue wealth immoderately, extravagantly, tastelessly, ungenerously, and without concern for the welfare of the poor or the magnificence of the city. Consider Martin Shkreli raising the price of a cheap

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9 Sir David Lindsay, 1552-1554, “Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis,” in Greg Walker, ed.,

*Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, pp. 541-623, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

anti-parasitic drug by a factor of 56, or in an earlier era Jeffrey Skilling of Enron inspired in management style by Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*, or in a still earlier era Leona Helmsley, The Queen of Mean, who agreed with our era's Donald Trump that "We don't pay taxes; only the little people pay taxes."

The American bourgeoisie moralizes its riches as just rewards for cowboy courage, or as a democratic creed of permissions used. The Hindu bourgeoisie moralizes its riches as the favor of Ganesh or the expression of spiritual worth from a previous reincarnation or as provisioning for those pesky cousins. As behavior, of course, a sheer materialism without sincere reference to the transcendent is common enough in all societies, bourgeois or not. But it is the official theory of none. Official theories are about the transcendent, a Beyond. Every human yearns for it.

And so the American millionaires, and more so the billionaires, will advocate and often practice a gospel of wealth specifically American. Andrew Carnegie – all right he was Scottish, too – gave away all his fortune. In France the rich are liable to reply that they were taxed at the office, and *l'État* therefore will provide. When Liliane Bettencourt, as heiress to the L'Oréal cosmetics fortune the richest woman in the world, set up a charity to offset the well justified opinion that she was a selfish jerk, she endowed it with . . . a half of one percent of her wealth. Not so across the waters. Carnegie viewed the rich, as many did in the first age of Darwin, as men who had by the very fact of richness proven themselves the best stewards of the world's wealth. But he viewed himself, by a doctrine parallel to the Jewish one of *tzedakah*, as the good

steward only for life and only if he spent his wealth in good works. “The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced. Such, in my opinion, is the true gospel concerning wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the rich and the poor.”<sup>10</sup> It didn’t. Only the doubling and redoubling and then again redoubling of real wages earned by the US poor from his time to the present did so, a factor of 8 unattainable by charity or by compelled redistribution. But anyway, as the richest man in the world he carried out his gospel, if not perhaps other portions of the Christian one. Not ay one-half of one percent, but one hundred percent, near enough. You have not heard of a rich Carnegie after Andrew.

The economist Donald E. Frey notes wisely in a review of Olivier Zunz’s *Philanthropy in America*: “The Methodist admonition to ‘earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can’ surely influenced more Americans than Carnegie’s “Gospel of Wealth” ever did. Yet, by the time Zunz picks up the story [in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century], religion is more a minor player than the lead actor. The naïve reader might conclude from Zunz’s book that [American] philanthropy sprang full-grown from rich entrepreneurs, who started foundations for no reason other than that they could.”<sup>11</sup> Yet still they did it. John D. Rockefeller’s visage in old age looked peculiar (because of loss

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10 Andrew Carnegie, 1889, “Wealth.” *North American Review*, no. 1991: June At <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/AIH19th/Carnegie.html> , p. 64.

11 Frey, Donald F. 2012. Review of Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History*. EH.net (January).

[http://eh.net/book\\_reviews/philanthropy-in-america-a-history/](http://eh.net/book_reviews/philanthropy-in-america-a-history/)

of all his hair from alopecia) in a way that fitted stereotypes about modern Scrooges. Giving out dimes to children didn't help much. His business practices, which were in fact ethically well above the average, had been systematically slandered by Ida Tarbell's muckraking book of 1904 (published in installments before the book in *McClure's Magazine*), *The History of the Standard Oil Company*. But Rockefeller, a devout Baptist, gave charity with a liberal hand from his young days in Cleveland, and later financed the University of Chicago, and still later a Rockefeller Foundation handing out grants to anti-capitalist professors. Nowadays in Chicago the Pritzkers, heirs to the Hyatt fortune, are typified by Jennifer N. Pritzker, who has founded a center for military history and financed studies of gender, her uncle Jay, who founded the Pritzker Architecture Prize, her cousin Penny who served as US Secretary of Commerce and Penny's brother J. B., who became governor of Illinois, neither of the using public office in Trumpian fashion to enrich them or their friends. And, more precisely pertinent to the point here, the gospel of wealth also characterizes the little cities of the Midwest. Muscatine in southeast Iowa (population 22,886 in 2010) finds its millionaires competing with each other in the Gatesian, Buffettian, Pritzkerian manner to give and give to the University of Iowa. Yes, to its sports teams, alas, but also massively to its hospital, such as in the Carver Pavilion.

Not so bad.

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Let me propose a counterfactual. Suppose European nationalism and socialism had not flourished as fresh political and economic ideologies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That is, suppose that the 18<sup>th</sup> century's idea of liberalism had not been challenged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and overturned in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by collectivisms of the right or left. Suppose that Europeans had retained the core liberal idea of "worthy of a free man": *liber*. No one should be a slave, whether to husband by stick or to master by whip or to state by tax and prohibition and murder by the police. Alternatively, suppose that the US was located on Mars. Suppose in other words that the theoretical opposition by right and left to a liberal ideal fashioned by Voltaire and Smith and Wollstonecraft had not arrived on American shores. I submit that in such a case the bourgeois men of the little Midwestern city would not be disdained but held in high esteem, as free men provisioning the rest of us in voluntary exchange. That is to say, I am claiming that European politics has long infected the American clerisy, providing it with theories about how awful George Babbitt was.

Liberalism is native to the US—along with, unhappily, illiberalisms such as racism and nativism. In Europe the rebellion of liberals against duke and bishop never quite fit the US case. Despite some unconvincing attempts by Dutch landowners along the Hudson and Boston brahmins running banks and Southern slave owners selling cotton and above all the Federalists of the Early Republic setting up as nouveau-faux-aristocrats, the US never had a real, inherited, military, rent-dependent, anti-business aristocracy. In parallel with the inability of the American faux-aristocrats to establish their rule, the established churches of colonial times gave way to theological anarchy



undermining bishops and presbyters alike. All Americans, even the bishops, are in business – something that startles European academics when they become acquainted with Americans such as the Milton expert, university entrepreneur, and public intellectual Stanley Fish (who appears in David Lodge’s academic novels as Morris Zapp). European and especially Continental academics are, and regard themselves, as high civil servants, not people in a business of science or scholarship.

The liberal theory, if not always the practice, is no physically coercing masters, a theory inspired by the Virginia slave-holder’s declaration that all men are created equal. An Englishman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century inquired of a Wyoming cowboy where to find his master. “He ain’t been born yet.”<sup>12</sup> By contrast, the reaction to liberalism in Europe, in conservative nationalism à la Carlyle and radical socialism à la Marx, expressed a nostalgia for the ancient physical mastery over people, by old lords or by the new State. At the same time an American like Thoreau was declaring for civil disobedience: “I heartily accept the motto, ‘That government is best which governs least’” (which was on the masthead of a magazine he contributed to).<sup>13</sup> No aristocrat or socialist he. No statist. Thoreau took on the family pencil-making firm of Thoreau and Son, improving

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12 Oakley Hall, “Powder River Country: The Movies, the Wards, and the Teapot Dome,” in

Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *Western Heritage: A Selection of Wrangler Award-Winning Articles*.

13 Thoreau, “Resistance to the Civil Government,” 1849, first sentence.

the machines and producing for a while the highest quality pencils in the country.<sup>14</sup> Imagine Carlyle or Marx running a pencil factory. Imagine Stanley Fish or Morris Zapp *not* doing so, in effect. Engels was an exception to the rule that the European clerisy disdained actual, bourgeois work. All of them admired the State extravagantly, as did the New Liberals in the UK in the 1870s and the US “liberals” such Woodrow Wilson at the first height of Progressivism.

In 1910 George Bernard Shaw looked back to a Great Conversion in Europe around 1848: “The first half [of the 19<sup>th</sup> century] despised and pitied the Middle Ages. The second half saw no hope for mankind except in the recovery of the faith, the art, the humanity of the Middle Ages. . . . For that was how men felt, and how some of them spoke, in the early days of the Great Conversion, which produced, first, such books as the Latter Day Pamphlets of Carlyle, Dickens’ *Hard Times*, . . . and later on the Socialist movement.”<sup>15</sup> For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there is scarcely an English or French intellectual who was not simultaneously the son of a bourgeois father and yet sternly hostile to everything bourgeois. Shaw’s father was a corn merchant, though not successful. The father of the critic John Ruskin (*Unto this Last* [1860] and other anti-

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14 Laura Dassow Walls, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

15 Shaw. 1912. *Introduction to Hard Times* (London: Waverly), portion reprinted as pp. 333-340 in G. Ford and S. Monod, eds., *Charles Dickens, Hard Times*, Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed. , New York: W.W. Norton, 1990, pp. 334-335.

liberal writings) was a wine importer; one grandfather was a successful wholesale merchant, the other ran a pub. The English-educated poet Arthur Hugh Clough, though the son of a rich cotton merchant of Charleston, South Carolina, reckoned he could justly sneer in 1862 at what he understood to be the businessman's ten commandments: "Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat, / When it's so lucrative to cheat. . . . / Thou shalt not covet, but tradition / Approves all forms of competition."<sup>16</sup>

The middle of the 19th century, then, was an abrupt sunset of clerical sympathy for the businessman and his commercial forces, a sun that had first risen in Netherlandish painting three centuries before. *Moby Dick* (1851), at least in the first mate Starbuck, can be read as taking a liberal view of business. But *The Confidence Man* (1857), likewise by Melville, cannot. Charles Dickens converted to an anti-bourgeois novelist in *Dombey and Son* (1848) and to a political novelist in *Hard Times* (1854), never to return to his earlier easiness about turning a little profit. Since 1848, from the very moment the businessman came into his own practically speaking, the novelists have not let up. Mark Twain thought of bourgeois men as thieves (admittedly, he thought of more or less everyone that way, as comical liars, fools, and con men, or their naïve victims). Zola's *Germinal* (1880) and *The Ladies' Paradise* (1883) exhibit the owners of coal mines and of soft-goods stores as villains. The theme reaches its height in Booth Tarkington's

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16 Clough, "The Latest Decalogue," 1862, at <http://www.potw.org/archive/potw238.html>

*The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (1920), and above all his *Babbitt*. It continued through the Wall Street movies (1987, 2010) and beyond.

By contrast, what may be labeled the Bourgeois Revaluation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century encouraged "innovism" – a name for the system much to be preferred to the scientifically mistaken and politically disastrous "capitalism." The tone is quite different from that of the Great Conversion. It is genially tolerant of bourgeois projecting. A century and a half before 1848 it is so in Addison, Steele, Defoe, and Lillo, or a century before in Ben Franklin and Samuel Johnson, or a half century before in Jane Austen, or even in the early Dickens of *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837). Something strange came over the mind of the clerisy during the Great Conversion, spilling at length into the US and fueling its regional prejudices.

The devaluation of the bourgeoisie at its hour of triumph was beyond strange. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the generations were at war, Ruskin and Clough against their bourgeois and liberal fathers, Turgenev's young nihilist protagonists in *Fathers and Sons* against theirs. As the critic Franco Moretti observes, in early Victorian literature (he instances novels of the 1840s and 1850s by Dickens, Disraeli, Gaskell, and Dinah Craik's *John Halifax, Gentleman* [1856]), "As the two generations are pitted against each other, the older one turns out to be more bourgeois than the younger." "I cannot think of any other genre, short of ancient tragedy," he continues, "where such a bitter curse binds together two consecutive generations. And the message of the plot is unmistakable:

there has been only one bourgeois generation – and now it’s disappearing, perverted or betrayed by its own children. Its moment is over.”<sup>17</sup>

The novelists of the period began to think of rich people as clever thieves or obsessed misers or lucky inheritors, or the illicit lovers of the wives of such people. Productivity, win-win, the Great Enrichment, mutual advantage, and the Bourgeois Deal (“Leave me alone and I’ll make *you* rich”) could have nothing to do with it. Thus in Dickens every hero starts poor, ending rich from inheritance – not from buying ideas low and selling them high in the tiresome, bourgeois way that at length has massively benefited the poorest among us. Honoré de Balzac is conventionally praised as having great insight into “capitalism” in France during the “bourgeois monarchy” of Louis Philippe. He was Marx’s favorite novelist. But, unlike Marx, he did not trouble to learn anything about political economy or for that matter, unlike Émile Zola a half century later, to learn anything much at all about the actual workings of the economy. Balzac’s pathetic, bourgeois character in his novel of 1835, *Père Goriot*, sells a product bound to evoke superior smiles in his readers, vermicelli (a kind of spaghetti, but funnier-sounding in Italian and French, since *verme* and *ver* are the words for “worm”). Goriot – not “Monsieur,” “My master,” a literal meaning still lively in French at the time, but “Père,” “[Old, Pitiful] Father” as a term by contrast of disrespect – is

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17 Franco Moretti, *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature*, London: Verso, 2013, p. 113.

idiotically devoted to his perfidious daughters. Balzac himself, like Mark Twain later, was a failed businessman who scorned businessmen. In *Père Goriot*, the hero Eugène de Rastignac, as in the other Balzac novels in which he appears, is seen as an ambitious lad from the South of France (as Balzac's father had been). He is corrupted by the high-fashion game of adultery in Paris under the Restoration and especially the July Monarchy of the "bourgeois" monarch. That's how an ambitious but poor lad gets ahead in the zero-sum economy assumed by the new left and right, and by Balzac, in 1835, and assumed down to the present among much of the clerisy, against the intervening evidence.

The historian Peter Gay, in the fifth volume of his portrait of the sexual and cultural history of the European bourgeoisie, noted that from 1800 onward:

Artists in all genres increasingly made society itself the target of their scorn. . . . Did not the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie love money and hate art? Was it not so different from the old honorable, public-spirited patriciate as to be in effect a new class? . . . Hence creative spirits felt duty-bound to detest the bourgeoisie and to adopt an aggressive stance that gave them pleasure as they mobilized to rescue the sacred cause of honest art, honest music, and honest literature. . . . This is the modernist myth that has continued to shape our perception of the Victorian middle classes' attitude toward the higher things.<sup>18</sup>

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18 Peter Gay, *Pleasure Wars: The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, New York: Norton, 1998,

Yet contrary to such currents, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and then especially in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, parts of the clerisy (soon to become a minority of it), and then a wider swathe of European public opinion permanently, did embrace the Bourgeois Deal. For the first time public opinion – an audience made up of citizens (a designation for a long time not including all the adult male indwellers, and never women) – began to matter in European politics. It was one of the causes of the brief liberal hour. Against the socialist line of Rousseau on the way to Lenin disembarking at the Finland Station, the business values of the bourgeoisie were praised, from Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to Alessandro Manzoni’s *I Promessi Sposi* (1827, 1842).<sup>19</sup> And at first in the United States and then in Australia the former peasantry and proletariat likewise adopted and praised bourgeois values, and started calling themselves when queried “middle class.”

Mostly what changed in the Bourgeois Revaluation causing the Great Enrichment was not the actual behavior of merchants and manufactures. The bourgeoisie of ancient Rome or Song-dynasty China behaved pretty much as the bourgeoisie of London or Amsterdam or New York did, and do. Max Weber was quite mistaken in 1905 to adopt a psychological hypothesis, that the bourgeoisie became more bourgeois, more hard working, more thrifty, more rational. No. What changed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and especially in the early 19<sup>th</sup> was the up-valuation of the same bourgeoisie. That is, what changed sharply, at first in the Netherlands and then in

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19 Alberto Mingardi, “A Lesson in Humility, A Lesson for Our Times: Alessandro Manzoni’s *The Betrothed*,” *Independent Review*, winter 2020.

Britain and in the British and Dutch settlements abroad, was the opinion the rest of the society had of trade, a Revaluation apparent in numerous cultural documents in Amsterdam, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Philadelphia. It was a sharp divergence from the contempt for trade evident in, say, Shakespeare, the son of a tradesman and a trader in London entertainments. As the economic historian Joel Mokyr puts it, "By the time of Queen Victoria's ascent to the throne, [Britain] had . . . learned to appreciate the free market." Such an ideological change, "the mother of all institutional change, needed to take place before economic growth was to become the norm rather than the exception." The outcome was the Bourgeois Era and the Great Enrichment. Long and widely may it spread.

## §

In 1901 Thomas Mann struck a note contrary to Flaubert's increasingly commonplace *haine du bourgeois*. In his first successful novel, *Buddenbrooks* (1901), Tom Buddenbrook (he is called "Tom" throughout) becomes the head of his north German bourgeois family. "The thirst for action, for power and success, the longing to force fortune to her knees, sprang up quick and passionate in his eyes."<sup>20</sup> A success at a bourgeois occupation (even that of a bourgeois novelist) is success in mutually advantageous deals, deals in which Tom the grain merchant delights. It is not the successful slaughter or successful double-dealing recounted in the literature of

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Mann, 1901. *Buddenbrooks*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter, New York: Vintage, 1952., p. 200.



aristocrats or of peasants. Think of Odysseus's trickery in escaping the Cyclops, and then his slaughter of the suitors, or Jack's trickery in stealing from the giant after climbing the beanstalk, and then his killing of it, or for that matter the endless treacheries and murders of Viking bands and English and French kings portrayed in the Icelandic sagas and in Michael Hirst's 2013 History Channel extravaganza based on them, *Vikings*.

Even from a strictly individual point of view the bourgeois virtues, though not those of Achilles or Jesus, are not ethical zeroes. Greece even in Homer's time was a commercial society, and one sees a trace of the merchant in the story of Odysseus's wanderings. As a later poet put it, the Greek trader venturing into the Atlantic beyond the Pillars of Hercules "unbent sails / There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam, / Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come; / And on the beach undid his corded bales."<sup>21</sup> The common honesty of a society of merchants goes beyond what would be strictly self-interested in a society of rats. The joke in the cartoon movie *Ratatouille* is that some of the rats are less rat-like than some of the humans. A reputation for fair dealing is necessary for a roofer whose trade is limited to a city of fifty thousand. One bad roof and he is ruined. And of course such ethics becomes internal, too. A professor at the University of Iowa refused to tell at a cocktail party the name of a roofer in Iowa City who had at first done a bad job for her (he redid the job free, at his own instigation)

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21 Mathew Arnold, "The Scholar Gypsy," 1853, last lines, at

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43606/the-scholar-gypsy>

because the roofer would be finished in town if his name got out in such a connection. The professor's behavior itself shows that ethical habits can harden into ethical convictions, the way a child grows from fear of shame and punishment toward consulting an impartial spectator, the man within the breast, as the Blessed Adam Smith put it in his other book. An unethical woman would have told the name of the roofer, to improve the story. After all, the Midwestern professor's own reputation in her business was not at stake.

The motto of the Buddenbrook family was "My son, attend with zeal to thy business by day; but do none that hinders thee from thy sleep at night." Milton Friedman shocked the High "Liberal" clerisy in 1970 with an article in the *New York Times Magazine* asserting that, as the headline put it, *The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.*" The headline writer, who of course was not Friedman, omitted the second half of the sentence. Yes, seek profit – after all, profit is the signal that more of this or that needs to be made for the benefit of consumers, and it is a goal, unlike the interests of an undefined group of "stakeholders," that managers have some claim to actually know how to get for the benefit of those who risk their wealth in the business, the owners. Yet act always, Friedman continued, "conforming to the basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom."<sup>22</sup> It is the North-German bourgeois' pride to be "a fair-dealing merchant,"

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22 Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits." *New York Times Magazine*, Sept 13, 1970.

with “quiet, tenacious industry,” to “make concessions and show consideration,” to have “assured and elegant bearing, . . . tact and winning manners,” a “liberal, tolerant strain,” with “sociability and ease, and . . . remarkable power of decision at a division” in the town assembly, “a man of action,” making “quick decision upon the advantageous course,” “a strong and practical-minded man, with definite impulses after power and conquest,” but by no evil means. “Men walked the streets proud of their irreproachable reputation as business men.”<sup>23</sup>

Mann was not sneering. Is it so very evil to hope with Babbitt and Tom and their ilk that “one can be a great man, even in a small place; a Caesar even in a little commercial town on the Baltic,” or in Muncie, Indiana? I think not. What exactly is wrong with “the dream of preserving an ancient name, an old family, an old business”? Not much, at any rate by comparison with the blood spilt by aristocrats defending a nine-hundred-year-old name, or the blood spilt (for theoretical reasons, you understand) by the clerisy-in-charge, inspiring and then leading mass slaughters during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lenin. Mussolini, Mao, Pol Pot, *et alii*. On the contrary, preserving by continuous betterment a business of making mutually advantageous trades in wheat or in pencils or in novels is good for the rest of us, that Bourgeois Deal: Let me make money by making things (even novels) that people are willing to pay for, and I’ll make the rest of the society rich.

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23 Mann 1901 (1952), pp. 42, 380, 209, 320, 144, 370, 34, 400.

And the bourgeois such as George Westinghouse or the bourgeoisies such as Coco Chanel in fact did. Real income per head for the poorest has risen since 1800 in the US by a factor of 20, and in Germany by a factor of 30, and in Japan by a factor of 50. Despite what you may have heard in the newspaper, it continues to rise, and in the world as a whole. It is the Great Enrichment, which the clerisy pointedly or ignorantly ignores in its disdain for modernity. The left and right sides of the clerisy express affecting love for the poor, either to nudge them or to judge them. But as the great (American-definition) “liberal” Lionel Trilling warned in 1948, “we must be aware of the dangers that lie in our most generous wishes,” because “once we have made our fellowmen the objects of our enlightened interest [we] go on to make them the objects of our pity, then of our wisdom, ultimately of our coercion.”<sup>24</sup> Both left and right are culpably ignorant of the main way that the poor have actually been raised up, the innovation arising from liberalism and its economic system of innovism, a doubling in every long generation of the ability to consume good and services – food, shelter, books, health care, higher education, adventure travel.

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In the early 1990s I was standing in an Evanston, Illinois, bookstore charmingly called Great Expectations, talking to the owner, Truman Metzel. It was a wonderful store, exhibiting I thought American bourgeois virtue. Through the combined virtues of

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24 Lionel Trilling, “Manners, Morals, and the Novel,” *Kenyon Review* 10(1), 1958: 11–27, p. 27.

prudence, hope, and courage called enterprise Metzel kept obscure university-press books in stock. Mine, for instance. It was a policy that a decade later, under a new owner, led to the shop's shuttering, under pressure from the big-box stores and especially from Amazon (where all my books, dear friends, stand ready to be purchased). On second thought, maybe Metzel was not all that prudent.

Anyway, I was saying to him, "You know, there are only two well-known European novels since 1848 that have portrayed businessmen on the job in anything like a sympathetic way. The first is Thomas Mann's tale of his north-German merchant family, *Buddenbrooks*. And the second . . ." Here I paused, or rather stuttered, which people sometimes interpret as pausing for dramatic effect. Another customer standing there piped up, "And the second is David Lodge's story of love between a university lecturer and a managing director, *Nice Work* [1988]."

Bingo. Those two alone, at any rate among the canon of the best that has been thought and known in the world, were the only books I could think of at the time with heroes who were businessmen. Perhaps there are others, I thought, but they are not well known. My thought was mistaken. Willa Cather, whom I later came to admire, is good on Midwestern businesspeople, especially in her short stories. And I later learned from the economist Robert Lucas, in an otherwise lifeless essay of his on the mechanics of investment and growth, of V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. The hero, a journalist, rejects the traditional custom in Trinidad of fourth cousins showing up for

handouts, and wants above all to own a house he has earned by work, not seized by the sword or appropriated by family handouts and tax eating.

Still later I learned of the novel *Round the Bend* (1951) by the Australian novelist Nevil Shute (most famous for *On the Beach* [1957], made in 1959 into a poignant film starring Gregory Peck). The owner of an air-transport company reflects on his business after the death of his brilliant chief engineer Constantien (he was called Connie, and was a religious man):

I was lonely and troubled, and at first there didn't seem to be much point in going on with anything; I was very tired, and I didn't know what to do. I thought of selling out my business, to Airservice, perhaps. . . . But after a time I got settled down, and then it seemed to me that it would be a better thing to carry on the business and run it in the way that Connie liked, so that in a materialistic world my air line should be an example running through Asia to show that men can keep the aircraft safe by serving God in Connie's way, and yet keep on the black side of the ledger. I'd go so far as to say, from my experience, that only by serving God in this way can you keep out of the red.<sup>25</sup>

Shute is pointing to a human characteristic, our need in Zenith or Zurich or Zhengzhou for a transcendent purpose, even in business, and our need for the guidance of love and faith and hope. It's just the way non-defective humans are, in addition to

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.fadedpage.com/books/20120913/html.php>. I thank Simon Taylor for the citation.

their pursuit of prudent and material profit. Ordinary prudence is a virtue in humans. But the mere pursuit of profit is shared with all forms of life, from bacteria and moss through our cousins the great apes – and in effect, we have recently learned, even by non-life such as viruses. It is not especially human, or bourgeois, or “capitalistic.” Max Weber indeed railed against the contrary notion, held without much reflection by the clerisy. “The notion that our rationalistic and capitalistic age,” he wrote, “is characterized by a stronger economic interest than other periods is childish.”<sup>26</sup> “This [greedy] impulse exists and has existed among waiters, physicians, coachmen, artists, prostitutes, dishonest officials, soldiers, nobles, crusaders, gamblers, and beggars. One may say that it has been common to all sorts and conditions of men at all times and in all countries of the earth, wherever the objective possibility of it is or has been given.”<sup>27</sup>

So European literature, including American and Australian and English Indian literature and other offshoots, does sometimes talk about businessmen with less than sneering contempt. Consider for example the economistic rhetoric of Robert Frost’s poetry, or Whitman’s compendious view of what is admirable in human life. The share of such talk, though, is startlingly smaller than the share of life taken up in business,

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<sup>26</sup> Weber, 1923, *General Economic History*, trans. Frank Knight, original English pub. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1927; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books 1981, p. 355.

<sup>27</sup> Max Weber, 1904–1905, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (*Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*), trans. T. Parsons (1930), from 1920 German edition. New York: Scribner’s, 1958, p. 17.

whether by the bourgeoisie or by the clerisy, or for that matter by the ordinary professor when she goes to the grocery store. T. S. Eliot, though a banker and publisher, had exactly one poem referring with some respect to bourgeois life, "Gerontion," in the form of a report on a "business" trip by the kings of Orient to Bethlehem. Wallace Stevens, though a surety bond lawyer for the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, had none.

Carol Shields is rare among contemporary novelists in declaring that "a novelist must give her characters work to do." She cited the critic Emma Allen, who "believes that the great joy of detective fiction is watching the working hero being busy every minute." Shields complained, "I've read novels about professors who never step into a classroom. They are always on sabbatical or off to a conference in Hawaii."<sup>28</sup> She had in mind, for example, Lodge's two other academic novels, *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World* (1985). Love at home, or lust in Hawaii, gets more attention in fiction than does prudence or justice at work. Courage on the battlefield figures more in art and literature than enterprise in the market. Henry James's characters in *The Ambassadors* (1903) are financed in their dalliances abroad by some sort of manufacturing back in New England. One character says to another that he will later tell her what it is. But James pointedly neglects to fulfill the promise, and never reveals what the undoubtedly most vulgar manufacturing was, or who the despicable parental Babbitts were.

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28 Carol Shields, *Unless*, London and New York: Fourth Estate, 2002, paperback of 2003, p. 264.



Somehow we have traveled from the sunny realism of Adam Smith in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the liberal ideology framed by him and carried on by Mill and Thoreau, and the like, to a dark and unrealistic pessimism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – at just the time that bourgeois dignity was succeeding in massively enriching the world. We’ve traveled from the English Bishop Samuel Butler's belief in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century that “it is manifest fact that . . . the generality are frequently influenced by friendship, compassion, gratitude; and even a general abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just” to Christopher Lasch’s assertion in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that we live in a culture of narcissism.<sup>29</sup> We've traveled from Smith’s belief that “the uniform, constant, and unmitigated effort of every man to better his condition . . . is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things towards improvement” to Georg Lukács’ assertion in his old age in the 1960s, after long experience as a communalist bureaucrat in Hungary, that “even the worst socialism is better than the best capitalism.”<sup>30</sup>

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29 *The Works of Bishop Butler*, David E. White, ed., Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, Boydell & Brewer, 2006, p. 39..

30 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 1776, Glasgow Edition, p. 343 (II.iii.31); and Lukács quoted in Paul Lendvai, 1999, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat*, rans. from the German by Ann Major, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 491.

German Romanticism was the detour following on from Rousseau. It still seems attractive to many, against the Scottish and liberal idea of letting people alone in their marketplaces to fashion a varied culture. I follow Isaiah Berlin in observing that one strand in Romance led to modern racism, by way of myths of *Kultur*, and another strand led to modern revolution, by way of myths of Action.<sup>31</sup> In high intellectuality the anti-liberals were inspired on both sides by Hegel, substituting for the human action of individuals in society a single path laid down by the State.<sup>32</sup> On left or right the statist idea keeps being revived, as now on the right by Senator Rubio's "common-good capitalism, the Keynesian professor Mariana Mazzucato's state control of investment and innovation, the Harvard law professor Adrian Vermeule's "common-good constitutionalism," and the Notre Dame professor of political theory Patrick Deneen's Catholic anti-liberalism.<sup>33</sup>

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31 See for example Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, London: Metropolitan Books, 1998, pp. 245, 247, 248

32 Jeffrey Tucker, *Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty*, Atlanta: Foundation for Economic Education, 2017.

33 Discussed in George Will, "When American conservatism becomes un-American," *Washington Post*, May 29, 2020, and in more detail in McCloskey, "Why the Enemies of Liberalism Fail" [A review essay on Deneen's *Why Liberalism Fails*], *Modern Age*, Summer 2018, pp. 15-23; and Mazzucato in McCloskey and Alberto Mingardi, *The Illiberal and*

The anti-bourgeois pose, and its specialization to anti-Middletown-bourgeoisie, is false, of course. Historians and sociologists who have benefited greatly from “capitalism” nonetheless attack it. The left and a good deal of the right have no idea how productive it has been, and take a non-historical approach: It could be sooooo much better, and I, at 29 years old, know how. Yet all actual bourgeois people have non-trading relations in their lives, and the trading itself is sociologically embedded. It is considered clever to sneer at businesspeople as prudence-only stick figures, in parodies like Marx’s Mister Moneybags, and in the endless movie sneers at corporate conformity organized by Hollywood producers devoted to corporate conformity.

## §

What then are we to infer? Clearly not that the US ever was or now is entirely liberal. The American colonies and their national offspring, as the economic historian Jonathan R. T. Hughes noted long ago, have had from the beginning a taste for violent interference in the lives of heretics, witches, slaves, Loyalists, Catholics, immigrants, Chinese, anarchists, union members, reds, homosexuals, civil rights workers, Blacks, Hispanics, and other irritating folk.<sup>34</sup> It is instead the claim that enterprise is America’s

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*Anti-Entrepreneurial State of Mariana Mazzucato.* Unpublished pamphlet/book, to be issued by the Adam Smith Institute, London, late in 2020. Draft of May 2020 available.

34 J. R. T. Hughes, *Social Control in the Colonial Economy*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976.

natural civic religion, whose priests are the economists and calculators and successful bourgeois from Benjamin Franklin to Joy Mangano. And the place has not always been the worse for it.

And it is to claim that the harsh prejudice directed at the little Midwestern city comes not from any notable sin of Babbitt peaceably selling estate but from the importation of a European anti-bourgeois ideology, whether conservative or progressive. Let us stop it, and begin to understand innovism and its material and cultural Great Enrichment. Let us realize that George G. Babbitt did it, down even to his conversion late in *Babbitt* to valuing higher education for his son. The problem of the modern world is not businessmen but tyrants, not Babbitt and Rabbit, but Berzelius “Buzz” Windrip in Lewis’ later novel *It Can’t Happen Here* and Big Brother in Orwell’s last, *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Let us focus on the poverty caused by tyranny, and realize that riches spiritual and material were caused in Zenith and the world since 1800 by liberalism. Leave me alone, dear, and I’ll make you rich.